



Kelly King Horne
Executive Director, Homeward, Richmond, Virginia

Kelly King Horne has served as Homeward's Executive Director since 2007. She worked in various collaborative roles with Homeward and the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg from 2003 to 2007. From 1995 to 2003, Kelly worked in Europe and the former Soviet Union with Habitat for Humanity International and with the Peace Corps. Kelly served as a Program Development Manager with Habitat for Humanity and worked particularly with Habitat affiliates in Romania, Armenia, and Northern Ireland. She also created the international staff training curriculum for Habitat for Humanity Europe/Central Asia.

Kelly serves on the Governor's Coordinating Council for Homelessness and the Affordability Workgroup of the Virginia Housing Commission. She serves on the City of Richmond Community Criminal Justice Board. Kelly received her M.A. in Religious Studies from Stanford University in 1993 and her B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from the American University in Washington, D.C. In 2007, Kelly was named one of the Richmond region's "Top 40 Under 40" by Style Weekly. She is a member of the Leadership Metro Richmond Class of 2011. She lives with her husband and two girls in Richmond, VA, across the street from her parents.

Overview of Greater Richmond Continuum of Care's Coordinated Access System Development

Homeward serves as the “backbone” organization for the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care (GRCoC), which covers the City of Richmond and a seven county area, and is the lead for GRCoC's coordinated entry system. Homeward combines annual Federal, State and local funding including HUD, state planning dollars, local government non-departmental funding, United Way funding, and other philanthropic dollars. In part due to data and planning functions, many corporations have provided funding for Homeward. GRCoC's focus on coordinated entry emerged as a result of its efforts to create better solutions for families in shelter through rapid re-housing dating back to 2007. The expansion of rapid re-housing through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program further accentuated the need for greater coordination across homeless services, for a way to differentiate which households need which types of programs and to prioritize households for assistance. Despite the CoC's recognition of the need for a coordinated entry system, previous efforts to design and implement this system had been unsuccessful.

A new statewide effort to end homelessness launched in September 2014 has given new life to the creation of a coordinated entry system, as an essential part of a larger strategy for ending Veteran homelessness. In 2014, the State developed its Plan to End Veteran Homelessness led by the Virginia Department of Veteran Services and held a statewide Rapid Results Boot Camp, which has led to efforts to implement a coordinated system for Veterans to access HUD-VASH, Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) assistance, and other resources. GRCoC is working in partnership with the local VA Medical Center to implement a coordinated entry system that will:

- Provide greater outreach to identify Veterans experiencing homelessness;
- Create multiple points of entry into the system;
- Implement standardized assessments that can be performed in the field by trained staff; and
- Coordinate the alignment of housing and services interventions based upon those other assessments and factors.

Although this effort is initially focused on Veterans, the community sees this as an opportunity to test approaches and build momentum toward the development of a more comprehensive system that will eventually serve all populations experiencing homelessness in the area.

Identification, Assessment, and Referral to Crisis Services and Permanent Housing

GRCoC and VA are using the Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) as their initial assessment and screening tool. Screenings can be performed in the field by trained staff from VA, the SSVF provider, the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program, and several other non-profit organizations. The system being designed uses the VI-SPDAT as an initial guide for the housing and crisis service interventions that are needed in the community. The scores for each Veteran are not treated as final or absolute, and other information and insights inform the housing intervention recommended through discussions at the case conferencing meetings. To date, aggregate results have indicated that approximately 10 percent of the Veterans assessed need permanent supportive housing interventions, 60 percent can end their homelessness through a rapid re-housing intervention, and 30 percent can be expected to resolve homelessness without targeted assistance. (Note: GRCoC believes that the lower percent of Veterans recommended for permanent supportive housing compared to other communities using this tool can be attributed to the progress already made locally toward ending chronic homelessness among Veterans.)

Connection to Mainstream Resources

While initially focused on resources that are specifically targeted to Veterans, Homeward and GRCoC see potential to help achieve greater integration with mainstream systems and resources. One early success has been the commitment by the local public housing authority of mainstream Housing Choice Vouchers for Veterans who no longer need the intensity of services provided under the HUD-VASH program, but who need ongoing rental assistance. Future plans include a focus on:

- Greater coordination with the criminal justice system to connect people experiencing homelessness and cycling through jail to housing and services;
- Engaging mainstream systems, such as the Department of Social Services, in both referring people to the coordinated entry system, and potentially performing the VI-SPDAT screenings;
- Strengthening connections with Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services to better address the needs of vulnerable households; and
- Developing connections with the mainstream workforce system to improve employment outcomes and financial stability for people exiting homelessness.

HUD is providing technical assistance to GRCoC to advance the integration of Medicaid-funded services into its programming.

Successes to Date

GRCoC and VA have found that their collaborative efforts to develop a coordinated entry system for Veterans has yielded significant progress already in reducing Veteran homelessness, and that creating this system is helping to strengthen local strategies to be more focused on housing outcomes. System and practice improvements to date include:

- Expanded outreach efforts and improved coordination between VA and non-VA outreach services, allowing for the better identification and engagement of unsheltered Veterans. All providers within the CoC refer identified Veterans for assistance through a streamlined point of entry.
- Assessment of the vast majority of Veterans known to be experiencing homelessness in the area. The Veteran who was assessed as having the highest level of vulnerability has made a successful transition into housing (in HUD VASH).
- The assessment tool has been integrated into the community's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). Releases of information are in place to enable assessments performed by VA staff to be entered into the HMIS system by Homeward staff.
- Implementation of interagency case conferencing and new housing navigation functions ensure that prioritized Veterans are effectively linked to the appropriate housing and services programs.
- Data from assessments is being used to inform the performance of existing programs and resources, including new staffing patterns and skill sets, as well as to identify gaps and inefficiencies in the system. This has resulted in a greater focus on housing search assistance and landlord cultivation.
- The targeting and utilization of HUD-VASH have improved as a result of expanded rapid re-housing and prevention capacity through the SSVF program.
- There is a greater local confidence that the community can achieve the goal of ending Veteran homelessness by the end of 2015.

Lessons Learned

Homeward and its partners have identified several lessons and challenges relevant for other communities:

- A clear lead organization with dedicated staff time and resources is critical to advancing implementation as well as integrating efforts across the various partners and stakeholders including the VA. Without Homeward serving in this role and capacity, it is unlikely that the CoC and partners would have made significant progress in implementation.
- The collaborative approach to design and implementation has enabled the community to identify systemic challenges, such as the need for data-sharing across systems and platforms, and to the development of collaboration solutions to improve referrals and services.
- Tackling coordinated entry for a specific population, namely Veterans, has made it possible to overcome complexity and make concrete progress more quickly. The resulting progress then creates momentum for broader systems change.
- The availability of uniform assessments and data has helped generate greater awareness among providers about the types and range of housing interventions that are needed. This process can also lead to a deeper understanding of the roles that their own programs should play within the community's system.
- This process has sparked conversations about the conversion of existing program models—from transitional housing to rapid rehousing or permanent supportive housing—but the fear of losing funding through the HUD Continuum of Care Program competition deters and prevents CoCs from making these changes.
- Based upon current resources and strategies, there will still remain a large number of non-Veteran, non-chronically homeless single adults within the community, which may undermine the public perception of progress.

Additional Opportunities for Federal Assistance and Support

To further guide implementation and identify the role that Federal assistance can contribute, the following questions have been raised by Homeward and its partners:

- Can HUD identify ways to encourage the reallocation of funds away from, or conversion of, less effective CoC Program-funded transitional housing programs, while reducing the risk of losing funding for CoCs and agencies?
- Can HUD expand eligibility for CoC Program-funded rapid re-housing resources to single adults, especially if a CoC can demonstrate that need with local data?
- Can VA provide guidance to encourage Grant and Per Diem programs to participate in and receive referrals to and from coordinated entry systems and to reduce barriers to entry and facilitate quicker permanent housing exits?
- Can Federal agencies provide guidance on how communities should use data from systems that use different definitions of homelessness, namely HUD's and ED's definitions, to inform local funding, policy and programmatic decisions?
- Can Federal agencies provide clearer guidance to mainstream systems on their role and process in identifying and referring people identified as experiencing homelessness to homeless assistance?
- Can DOL provide greater encouragement or incentives to workforce systems to align their employment services with homeless services, such as rapid re-housing?



Elizabeth (Libby) Boyce, L.C.S.W.

Homeless Services Coordinator, Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office (CEO)

Libby Boyce is the Homeless Services Coordinator for the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office. In this role, Ms. Boyce advises the Board of Supervisors on all homeless related policy, planning and programmatic issues that impact the County. She facilitates several County interdepartmental efforts to develop and implement more permanent housing and corresponding supportive services. In addition, she ensures that the Chief Executive Officer, the Board and the County departments have a current and strong understanding of federal, state and local strategies, activities and policy implications that affect how homeless housing and services are planned and delivered. Ms. Boyce has led processes that have resulted in collaborative and coordinated models of care for homeless families, single adults and youth.

Libby received her Master of Social Work in 1989 from Southern Connecticut State University and spent the first 20 years of her career working with and for people living with HIV/AIDS both in New Haven Connecticut and Los Angeles, California. Prior to her current role, she was the Homeless Coordinator for the Department of Health Services (DHS) where she developed a recuperative care model for homeless individuals who no longer require acute hospital care, but do require some medical oversight; the Access to Housing for Health Program which provided permanent supportive housing for DHS patients; and the Benefit Entitlement Services Team Program, a partnership with the Social Security Administration which demonstrated that homeless individuals eligible for Supplemental Security Income can get onto the program quickly and efficiently on the first application submission.

Overview of Los Angeles County's Homeless Families Solutions System (HFSS)

Historically, there was a dearth of family-centered homeless services in Los Angeles County; families experiencing homelessness were typically directed to the adult shelter system. As a result, families often came to downtown Los Angeles to receive assistance due to the concentration of resources in the Skid Row neighborhood—a cause of concern for elected officials and housing and service providers. In 2009, the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Program (HPRP) helped demonstrate the effectiveness of rapid re-housing strategies, but also helped make clear the need for an infrastructure throughout the County to serve families and to divert them from seeking services in Skid Row.

Efforts to create this infrastructure began in 2010 with the pilot Family Transitions Project, shifting shelter resources to family services agencies. This work advanced further in 2012 and 2013 with the creation of six Family Solution Centers by weaving together both HUD Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and county homelessness prevention funding. In June 2013, one system of care focused on shelter and transitional housing for families experiencing homelessness was designed, incorporating the Family Solution Centers and two existing TANF programs.

The result of these efforts was the Homeless Families Solutions System, which was launched on July 1, 2014, and now features eight regionally-based Family Solutions Centers throughout the County. HFSS is a regional approach to addressing family homelessness by permanently re-housing families quickly and efficiently while connecting families to supportive services within their own communities across Los Angeles County. Developed in response to the local acknowledgement of the need for ongoing resources and coordination of efforts to end homelessness among families, HFSS represents a coordinated response among multiple departments of the County and City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, and many non-profit partners.

Identification, Assessment, and Referral to Crisis Services and Permanent Housing

HFSS has established a system through which, via multiple possible points of entry, families are screened for crisis housing and services within one business day of referral, and subsequently assessed using a common assessment tool, the Vulnerability Index Family Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-FSPDAT), within five business days of screening. The assessment focuses on identifying the funding sources for which each family is eligible and assessing barriers to housing stability. A permanent housing plan is developed based upon the family's needs, including the length of rental subsidy, type and duration of supportive services to be provided, and whether the family should be prioritized for Permanent Supportive Housing. Plans are flexible to ensure that families do not fall through the cracks if they do not achieve immediate housing stability.

Connection to Mainstream Resources

HFSS partners have been intentional about integrating mainstream systems and resources into the system's design. The assessment process determines whether the family needs substance abuse or mental health services provided through the mainstream behavioral health care system, and each FSC has a mental health clinician and substance abuse counselor on-site. The process also integrates eligibility determination for TANF, SNAP, and Medi-Cal benefits. HFSS utilizes TANF funding to provide rapid re-housing interventions, and social services link families to other resources, such as TANF-funded subsidized employment. In collaboration with HFSS, the Los Angeles County Unified School District and its homeless liaisons refer families known or suspected to be experiencing homelessness to the County information and referral line (211 LA County) for a referral to the appropriate FSC.

Successes to Date

HFSS now combines over \$10 million in annual Federal, State, and local funding into one coordinated, community-based, crisis response system for families experiencing homelessness. As of July 1, 2014, the funding combines HUD ESG, TANF, CDBG, county homelessness prevention, and city general funds. HFSS has been successful at implementing a referral and assessment process that integrates:

- Family Solutions Centers;
- 211 LA County;
- Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), which administers TANF, SNAP, and Medi-Cal;
- LA County Department of Mental Health (DMH), other County departments;
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority; and
- Community-based shelter, housing, and service providers.

Families experiencing homelessness can access HFSS assistance through 211 LA County, directly from DPSS, or from an emergency housing provider, and are referred to the closest Family Solutions Center. HFSS has also developed a set of performance goals and measures focused on timeliness of assessments and referrals, access to emergency housing, obtainment of permanent housing, and rates of return to homelessness. To date, HFSS has served 1,545 households, including 238 households headed by a transition age youth. Two hundred and thirty-three families were diverted from the homeless service system. Two hundred and ninety-five of the 1,545 households served have obtained permanent housing, while 570 households have been placed in interim housing as they finalize permanent housing plans.

Lessons Learned

Los Angeles County and its partners have identified several challenges and considerations relevant for other communities, including:

- Collaborative, deliberative planning processes are essential to ensuring a shared vision and focus on permanent housing solutions and connection to mainstream resources.
- There is a need for significant financial investments to support a system with multiple facilities throughout Los Angeles County, to accommodate multidisciplinary activities, and to create appropriate interventions for families experiencing homelessness.
- HFSS must ensure adequate and stable staffing and an infrastructure to manage many funding sources and cross-system processes, even during ebbs and flows of availability of funding for interim and permanent housing and services. There is currently a lack of funding streams for such costs.
- Multiple funding sources with varying bureaucratic requirements create significant barriers for families experiencing homelessness and for the agencies funded to serve them. Providing one system of care through a “braided” funding approach requires significant administrative oversight to ensure that all funds are used appropriately.

Opportunities for Federal Assistance and Support

To further guide implementation and identify the role that Federal assistance can contribute, the following questions have been raised by Los Angeles County and its partners:

- Can Federal agencies provide more guidance and encouragement to mainstream programs to identify households experiencing homelessness and work with coordinated entry systems to provide assistance to these households?
- Can Federal agencies provide more guidance about how local communities should coordinate

efforts with other systems like TANF and the workforce system, which each use different definitions of homelessness?

- Can Federal agencies provide more guidance and/or regulatory flexibility that would make it easier to manage the “braided” funding streams necessary to provide seamless access to housing and services for families experiencing homelessness?
- Can Federal agencies help identify funding sources to help cover the costs of coordinated entry systems, including the staffing and infrastructure needed to manage the processes?
- Can HUD/SNAPS provide guidance about planned standards for coordinated assessment and entry?